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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/618,636	07/15/2003	John MacNeil	WLJ.070D	5656
20987	7590	11/28/2006	EXAMINER PHAM, THANHHA S	
VOLENTINE FRANCOS, & WHITT PLLC ONE FREEDOM SQUARE 11951 FREEDOM DRIVE SUITE 1260 RESTON, VA 20190			ART UNIT 2813	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 11/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/618,636	MACNEIL ET AL.
	Examiner Thanhha Pham	Art Unit 2813

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 9/18/2006 and interview dated 11/27/2006.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 23,25,26 and 28-32 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. 11/27/2006.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to Applicant's Amendment dated 9/18/2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

1. Claims 23, 25-26 and 28-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Chooi et al [US 6,436,824].

Chooi et al (figs 1 &2, cols 1-5) discloses a stack of dielectric layers comprising: a carbon-doped SiO₂ dielectric layer (18, col 4 lines 19-30: oxidation of organosilanes with NO, N₂O, N₂O₄ would provide the carbon-doped SiO₂) having a first dielectric constant of less than 3 and a first etch rate; and a carbon-doped silicon nitride/a nitrogen-doped silicon carbide (20, dielectric comprising Si, C and N, col 4 lines 59-64) having a second dielectric constant of about 3 or more and a second etch rate, the carbon-doped SiO₂ dielectric layer and the carbon-doped silicon nitride/ nitrogen-doped silicon carbide generally having equal dielectric constants (low dielectric constant).

Chooi et al does not mention:

a) the carbon-doped silicon nitride/ nitrogen-doped silicon carbide (20) having the second dielectric of less than 3.

b) the carbon-doped SiO₂ dielectric layer and the carbon-doped silicon nitride/ nitrogen-doped silicon carbide have detectably different etch characteristics wherein the first etch rate is greater than the second etch rate wherein a ratio of the first etch rate to the second etch rate is at least 2.5:1.

Regarding to **a)**, the claimed range of dielectric constant of the carbon-doped silicon nitride/ nitrogen-doped silicon carbide being less than 3 would be obvious to Chooi et al since Chooi et al discloses the carbon-doped silicon nitride/ nitrogen-doped silicon carbide being about 3 which is very close the claimed dielectric constant of less than 3. Noted that About permits some tolerance. At least about 10% was held to be anticipated by a teaching of a content not to exceed about 8%. *In re Ayers*, 154 F2d 182, 69 U.S.P.Q. 109 (C.C.P.A. 1946). *In re Erickson*, 343 F 2d 778, 145 U.S.P.Q.207(C.C.P.A 1965).

Regarding to **b)**, the claimed characteristics of the first etch rate and the second etch rate would have been obvious to an ordinary artisan practicing the invention because a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention (using the stack of dielectric layers in condition of etching such that the ratio of the first etch rate of the first material to the second etch rate of the second material being at least 2.5:1) must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to

patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.

► With respect to claims 25 and 28, the claimed ranges of differences dielectric constant of the carbon-doped SiO₂ relative to the dielectric layer comprising silicon, carbon & nitrogen (carbon-doped silicon nitride or nitrogen-doped SiC) would have been obvious to an ordinary artisan practicing the invention because, absent evidence of disclosure of criticality for the range giving unexpected results, it is not inventive to discover optimal or workable ranges by routine experimentation. *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). Furthermore, it appears that these changes produce no functional differences and therefore would have been obvious. See *In re Woodruff*, 919 F.2d 1575, 1578, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Double Patenting

2. Claims 31-32 objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claims 29-30. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Conclusion

3. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP

§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

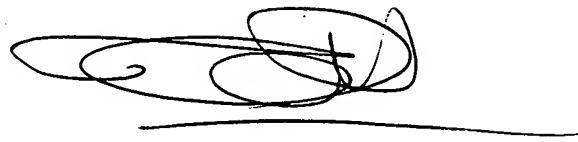
4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thanhha Pham whose telephone number is (571) 272-1696. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday and Thursday 9:00AM - 9:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carl Whitehead can be reached on (571) 272-1702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

Art Unit: 2813

you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



TSP

THANHHA S. PHAM
PRIMARY EXAMINER